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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 001101

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STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS GPERSON AND CGAY
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/13/2016
TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: DELTA SITREP: AMCIT AND ADDITIONAL HOSTAGES
SEIZED IN RIVERS STATE

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

One Amcit Among Recent Kidnappings in Port Harcourt

¶1. (SBU) According to an ExxonMobil source, the American captain of a service vessel under contract to Exxon, the "MV Jackie Chouest," was reportedly kidnapped from a bar in Port Harcourt Saturday night (August 12). We are attempting to get full confirmation of the kidnapping and the full name of the Amcit from ExxonMobil.

¶2. (SBU) Initially reports we received indicated that between 15-20 expatriates were kidnapped from various evening venues in Port Harcourt, Rivers State capital, on August 13. It appears that the number of expatriate hostages as initially reported to us was exaggerated. While the situation is still far from clear, we are fairly certain that 5 expatriates were kidnapped from the "Goodfellas" nightclub, a popular watering hole for oil sector workers in Port Harcourt. According to an eyewitness, approximately 15 armed assailants in military garb entered the establishment firing rounds into the ceiling and specifically looking for expatriates. Several expatriates managed to escape during the confusion but 5 were seized and placed in a minibus. Evidently, there was a brief firefight with a few policemen as the assailants left the vicinity with their captives. No injuries were reported. (Comment: The initial report of 15-20 hostages was probably due to the confusion and inaccuracy inherent in reporting a traumatic event. Also, several expatriates apparently fled the bar and initially it was assumed these expatriates were also apprehended. End comment.)

¶3. (SBU) Reliable reports indicate that two British, one Irish, one German, and one Polish national were kidnapped from the nightclub. Witnesses identified the hostages as Ian Rawlings and John Guyan (British), Bryant Fogerty (Irish), Gerd Czech (German) and Tomasz Andrologc (Polish). The kidnappers have apparently been in contact with the Rivers State Government and the Police. However, no specific demands have been tabled.

¶4. (SBU) We also have unconfirmed reports of two expatriates, a man and woman, kidnapped in a carjacking in Port Harcourt late last night as well. (Note: One account says this attack occurred in Woji and that there may have been three victims. End Note.)

¶5. (SBU) There is another unconfirmed report of three unidentified expatriate employees of AGIP being kidnapped. One account also mentions the death of a Nigerian Motorized Policeman (MOPOL) killed outside an Agip flow station. (Note: Another account said the three AGIP employees were taken from another Port Harcourt bar, Cheers. End Note.)

Government Response So Far

¶6. (U) Rivers State authorities have called for a meeting with oil industry representatives today in Port Harcourt to discuss the deteriorating security situation in the Niger Delta.

¶7. (C) The Consul General spoke to Rivers Governor Peter Odili who claimed the attacks were carried out by the same group responsible for last week's kidnappings in Port Harcourt. Odili asserted that the crimes were politically motivated and that the intellectual authors were actors from outside his state working to derail his 2007 presidential ambitions. He continued that these actors had enlisted the help of gangs in his state who also want to realize their political ambitions within Rivers State. Odili mentioned that his meeting with representatives of the oil companies

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would be focused on devising security measures to counter this campaign of hostage-taking.

Filipino Hostages Released

¶8. (C) The three Filipino hostages held since August 4 were released last night (August 13.) No additional information has been provided regarding terms of release. German expatriate Guido Schiffaiph, an employee for Julius Berger kidnapped on August 3 and reportedly held at the same location as the Filipinos, remains in captivity. (Comment: Most likely, the same group that freed the Filipino three also conducted the August 13 night club kidnapping. End comment.)

Meeting the GON

¶9. (C) Ambassador Campbell is convening a meeting with the ambassadors of other affected countries (countries either with nationals taken hostage or oil companies in the area) to discuss meeting the Nigerian National Security Advisor to discuss the security situation in the Niger Delta.

Consular Update

¶10. (SBU) A warden message will be published warning Amcits in Port Harcourt of the increased danger due to the spate of kidnappings. The Overseas Security Action Council Delta Working Group, consisting of oil and oil service companies with operations in the Niger Delta, will convene tomorrow morning (August 15) to discuss the latest security concerns and gather additional information. Apart from the reported Amcit taken hostage on August 12 (paragraph 1) there are no other reported incidents involving any Amcits.

Comment

¶11. (C) The method used in the reported August 12 kidnapping of the Amcit and the August 13 Goodfellas kidnapping is similar to that employed in the kidnappings of the German, Filipino, Belgian, and Moroccan expatriates claimed by the Movement of the Niger Delta People (MONDP). We will continue to gather information about the events over the weekend to determine the precise number of hostages and whether any more Amcits are affected. We will also confer with the oil companies and GON about measures to reduce the vulnerability of oil workers while also moderating any impulse the GON may have to take precipitous action in the face of these latest affronts to their security infrastructure. We will counsel nonviolent resolution of these and the other recent episodes.
End comment.

¶12. (U) This cable cleared by Embassy Abuja.
BROWNE